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Separation as the Basic Method of Realistic Metaphysics: The Approach by the Lublin Philosophical School Representatives

Viewing the history of metaphysics, we can see that considerations on the separation method were undertaken not so long ago—only in the 20th century. Among the authors who first saw the need to do it were F. A. Blanché¹ and L. M. Régis.² L. B. Geiger proposed the first more comprehensive description of the separation method.³ A considerable contribution to the research has been made by D. J. Robert,⁴ A. A. Maurer,⁵ G. P. Klubertanz,⁶ M. V. Leroy,⁷ H. Renard,⁸ R. W. Schmidt,⁹

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¹ F. A. Blanché, *La théorie de l'abstraction chez S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1935), 237–251.

² L. M. Régis, *Epistemology*, trans. I. M. Byrne (New York 1959), 312–331.

³ L. B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1942), 318–321; *idem*, “Abstraction et separation d’après S. Thomas,” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 31 (1947): 3–40.

⁴ D. J. Robert, “La Métaphysique, science distinct de toute autre discipline philosophique selon s. Thomas d’Aquin,” *Divus Thomas* 50 (1947): 206–223.

⁵ A. A. Maurer, “Introduction,” in St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, trans. A. A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), VII–XLI.

⁶ G. P. Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 49–60.



J. Maritain,¹⁰ É. Gilson,¹¹ J. Owens,¹² and J. F. Wippel.¹³ A Polish philosopher, M. A. Krapiec, has formulated a comprehensive conception of the separation method using those analyses. He has shown the specificity of the method and its importance for metaphysical cognition.¹⁴ Reflections on the separation method allowed Krapiec to prove the rightness of a new interpretation of Thomas Aquinas's metaphysics proposed by Maritain and Gilson. In this sense, it is an entirely different type of metaphysics than the one developed throughout the ages by the representatives of Thomism. In this new interpretation of Aquinas's metaphysics, it is the act of existence that plays a crucial role; the act of existence lies at the basis of the structure of being. Thus, it founds the realism of metaphysical cognition. The separation method is an indispensable condition of the realism of metaphysics because it does not omit the fact of existence and even more—it is totally oriented toward the existential aspect of being, which makes the core of the metaphysi-

⁷ M. V. Leroy, "«Abstraction» et «separatio» d'après un texte controversé de saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 48 (1948): 328–339.

⁸ H. Renard, "What is St. Thomas' Approach to Metaphysics?," *The New Scholasticism* 30 (1956): 67–80.

⁹ R. W. Schmidt, "L'Emploi de la Separation en Metaphysique," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 58 (1960): 373–393.

¹⁰ J. Maritain, *Short Treatise on Existence and the Existent* (New York: Panteon, 1948).

¹¹ É. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), 190–215.

¹² J. Owens, "Metaphysical Separation in Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 34 (1972): 287–306.

¹³ J. F. Wippel, "Metaphysics and 'Separatio' According to Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* 31, no. 3 (1978): 431–470.

¹⁴ Krapiec presented his conception of the separation method, among others, in: *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 86–100, *Teoria analogii bytu* [The Theory of the Analogy of Being] (Lublin: RW KUL, 1993), 140–145, *Byt i istota* [Being and Essence] (Lublin: RW KUL, 1994), 143–149.

cal cognition, explanation, and justification.¹⁵ Though all the authors who had dealt with the problem of separation had seen its sources in St. Thomas Aquinas metaphysics, they nevertheless had not seen how broad its “scope” is within the entire area of the metaphysical cognition. It is why the achievements of the Lublin Philosophical School in the research on separation must be admitted a large-scale significance in the whole literature on the subject.¹⁶ Apart from Krąpiec, the matter was dealt with by such philosophers as S. Kamiński,¹⁷ Z. Zdybicka,¹⁸ A. B. Stępień,¹⁹ and A. Maryniarczyk.²⁰ They have specified some chosen aspects of Krąpiec’s theory and shown how it can be applied in phi-

¹⁵ A. Maryniarczyk, *Metoda metafizyki realistycznej* [The Method of Realistic Metaphysics] (Lublin: Wyd. KUL, 2005), 17.

¹⁶ For more information about the Lublin Philosophical School see M. A. Krąpiec, A. Maryniarczyk, “The Lublin Philosophical School: Founders, Motives, Characteristics,” trans. H. McDonald, *Studia Gilsoniana* 4, no. 4 (2015): 405–422; M. A. Krąpiec, A. Maryniarczyk, “The Lublin Philosophical School: Historical Development and Future Prospects,” trans. H. McDonald, *Studia Gilsoniana* 4, no. 4 (2015): 423–441; M. A. Krąpiec, A. Maryniarczyk, “Metaphysics in the Lublin Philosophical School,” trans. H. McDonald, *Studia Gilsoniana* 5, no. 2 (2016): 391–427.

¹⁷ S. Kamiński, “The Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics. Metody współczesnej metafizyki,” in S. Kamiński, *On the Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics. Metody współczesnej metafizyki*, trans. M. B. Stępień (Lublin: PTTA & Società Internazionale Tommaso d’Aquino, 2019), 69–304.

¹⁸ Z. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu. Próba wyjaśnienia relacji między światem a Bogiem* [Participation of Being. An Attempt at Explaining the Relation between the World and God] (Lublin: PTTA, 2017), 135–141.

¹⁹ A. B. Stępień, *Wprowadzenie do metafizyki* [Introduction to Metaphysics] (Kraków: Znak, 1964), 51–58.

²⁰ Except for the mentioned *Metoda metafizyki realistycznej* [The Method of Realistic Metaphysics], A. Maryniarczyk takes up the topic of the separation method in: “Podstawy rozumienia i interpretacji separacji metafizycznej [The Foundations of Understanding and Interpretation of the Metaphysical Separation],” *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 24, no. 2 (1988): 139–160; “Proces wyodrębniania przedmiotu metafizyki [The Process of Identifying the Object of Metaphysics],” *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 26, no. 2 (1990): 55–87; *Realistyczna interpretacja rzeczywistości* [Realistic Interpretation of Reality] (Lublin: PTTA, 2005), 121–137; also with M. A. Krąpiec, “Metafizyka [Metaphysics],” in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii* [The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy], vol. 7, ed. A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin: PTTA, 2006), 109–112.

losophy.²¹ The presentation of the separation method in the philosophers' conception, as mentioned earlier, involves pointing out its ontological and cognitive sources, its application in identifying the object of the metaphysical cognition, and its function as a general method of metaphysical cognition.

The Sources of the Separation Method

In his *Commentary on Boethius' Book "On the Trinity,"* St. Thomas notes three kinds of discernment characteristic of the human intellect connected with the three basic methods of the three main types of sciences: physics, mathematics, and metaphysics. While in the two former ones the discernment consists in abstracting—in physics, we must distinguish what is general from what is particular, in mathematics the understanding involves the distinction between the form and matter—in metaphysics, it consists in joining and dividing, which is called by St. Thomas "separation" (Lat. *separatio*).²² Since if the method proper to metaphysics has to comprehend being as being—that is, in each particular instance it must grasp in cognition what is decisive for being a being—then it cannot be based on the act of abstraction whose specificity consists in identifying what is general in particular. Despite being the object of intellectual cognition, what is general does not constitute the reason for being concrete things, because of that St. Thomas saw

²¹ See A. Lekka-Kowalik, T. Duma, "Via ad veritatem. O metodach uprawiania filozofii w szkole lubelskiej [Via ad Veritatem. On the Methods of Philosophy in the Lublin School]," in *Lubelska Szkoła Filozoficzna: Historia–Koncepcje–Spory* [The Lublin Philosophical School: History–Conceptions–Controversies], ed. A. Lekka-Kowalik, P. Gondek (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2019), 147–173.

²² "Sic ergo in operatione intellectus triplex distinctio invenitur. Una secundum operationem intellectus componentis et dividētis, quae separatio dicitur proprie; et haec competit scientiae divinae sive metaphysicae . . ." S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, cura et studio B. Decker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), q. 3, a. 3., resp.

the need to find for metaphysics such a method which would allow identifying in a real being the “factors” that constitute its beingness without abstracting from its individuality and concreteness.

This intention of St. Thomas was well-read by Krąpiec, who, additionally, reinforced it by showing a broad and far-reaching application of separation in the metaphysical cognition, as well as by proving that the method lies at the basis of human cognition, which means that the acts characteristic of the separation method are performed in the fundamental acts of the human cognition often described as the primary cognitive experience or as the metaphysical experience.²³ That is why Krąpiec associates the separation method, and consequently all the metaphysical cognition, with the so-called “spontaneous” or “pre-reflective” cognition which he treats as a natural way of the person’s cognitive approach toward reality—preceding the reflection as such and not involving any previous knowledge or any assumptions.²⁴ At stake, there is only a pure cognitive contact of a cognizing person with the cognized reality; in such connection, only the receptiveness of the human cognitive faculties is revealed as well as the acting of the objects—which are within the scope of a concrete act of cognition—on those faculties whose actualization takes place exclusively due to the real existence of the objects.

The analysis of the primary act of cognition allowed Krąpiec to define its nature which on the level of spontaneous cognition is not revealed as so-called *simplex apprehensio* (a simple conceptual apprehension) but as an existential judgment which—in its basic form—comes down to the affirmation of the existence of the cognized being, acquir-

²³ See M. A. Krąpiec, “Doświadczenie i metafizyka [Experience and Metaphysics],” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 24, no. 1 (1976): 5–16.

²⁴ Krąpiec, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, 90.

ing, as Kamiński notes, the form of the intellectual intuition.²⁵ In this way, the act of an existential judgment became for Krapiec the basis of the metaphysical cognition and thereby the base of the method proper to such comprehension, which is nothing more but the development of what is already performed on the level of spontaneous cognition in the most basic acts of the human cognition. According to Krapiec, only such an attitude toward the basis of human cognition can guarantee its realism and, thus, only the separation method enables to substantiate the realism of metaphysics. The analysis of spontaneous cognition allows us to discover the content of the primary cognitive acts and, in this way, we find out the proper object of the human cognition as such, which is usually defined by the phrase “being as being.” Identifying the appropriate object of metaphysics is carried out by Krapiec in a methodical mode through the separation method. The core of the procedure is to grasp the very foundations of the human cognition; hence in the process of determining the object of metaphysics—simultaneously—the formulation of the method of metaphysical cognition is established; this method, if it is to guarantee realism of cognition, cannot be defined *a priori*.

The Method of Identifying the Object of Metaphysics

Within the framework of metaphysical separation as the method of identifying the proper object of a realistically understood metaphysics, Krapiec distinguishes three basic stages through which, starting from the primary apprehension of a concrete being, separation acts are carried out, and thanks to them, the content of the apprehension is making explicit until reaching ultimately transcendental plane on which it is

²⁵ S. Kamiński, “Explanation in Metaphysics. Wyjaśnianie w metafizyce,” in S. Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics. Z metodologii metafizyki* (Lublin: PTTA & Società Internazionale Tommaso d’Aquino, 2019), 193.

stated what inseparably is included within the scope of each cognitive apprehension; in this way, the proper object of the human cognition as such is determined, which, simultaneously, is the appropriate object of the metaphysical cognition. The content of the primary apprehension is what intellect cognizes first (*primum cognitum*) and what was called in tradition “the concept of being,” though talking about the “concept” in this case is somewhat problematic because what *de facto* takes place here is the acts of cognition that proceed the process of conceptualizing.

At the first stage, there are existential judgments, which—as it has already been mentioned—follow the cognitive contact of the cognizing subject with the object existing within the field of the subject’s cognition; without the real presence of the object, the cognition could not be actualized. The conception of existential judgments was based on the existential interpretation of being forwarded by St. Thomas Aquinas. In his *Commentary on Boethius’ Book “On the Trinity,”* apart from the conceptual cognition, he distinguishes another operation of the intellect called “judgment,” to which he ascribes a strict connection with grasping the existence of a being—*iudicium respicit esse rerum*.²⁶ In Krapiec’s interpretation, an existential judgment is a cognitive act that directly captures the existence of a being; this is verbalized in the sentence “x exists.” Hence the phrase “an existential judgment” is both about the cognitive act and its product.²⁷ The core of this kind of cogni-

²⁶ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3, resp.

²⁷ Krapiec presented his conception of existential judgments in (among others): “O realizm metafizyki [For Realism of Metaphysics],” *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 12, no. 4 (1969): 9–20; *id.*, “Doświadczenie i metafizyka,” 5–16; *id.*, “Pojęcie–słowo [Concept–Word],” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 26, no. 1 (1978): 83–112. For Krapiec’s conception of existential judgments, see W. Chudy, “Poznanie istnienia (bytu) w ujęciu tomistów egzystencjalnych (dokończenie) [The Cognition of the Existence (of Being) as Viewed by Existential Thomists (Completion)],” *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 18, no. 2 (1982): 41–69; A. Gondek, “Egzystencjalny sąd [Existential Judgment],” in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii* [The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy], vol. 3, ed. A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin: PTTA, 2002), 45–52.

tive approach is the affirmation of the existence of a being, which, in some primary meaning, has an immediate and spontaneous character; this is why, according to Maryniarczyk, one should not yet take here into account an intentional relation toward the object.²⁸ As W. Chudy notices, the subject reacts sort of instinctively to “the presence of being strongly manifesting itself.”²⁹ The decisive moment here is immediate contact of a cognizing subject with a concrete being, which decides about the singularity of such judgments. Krąpiec describes this moment as “the point of touch” between two existences or two acts, and he considers this to be the most principal and authentic cognitive experience of the subject. We indeed have to do with an existential judgment in the subject’s interior experience of the existence of one’s own “I,” but, despite epistemological equality of both kinds of judgments, the latter is secondary in terms of time and methodology.³⁰

The act of existential judgment is a cognitive “answer” by the subject to the existing reality, which actualizes the human being as a cognizing being—“the thing’s existence awakens our intellect to the possibility of cognition.”³¹ At the same time, there is an act of apprehension, based on senses, of the content of the object as “something that exists.” That is why Krąpiec speaks about the “pincer-like” grasping of a being, that is, in the aspect of its existence and the aspect of its content.³² Nevertheless, the feature of content comes as the most potentialized appre-

²⁸ Maryniarczyk, “Podstawy rozumienia i interpretacji separacji metafizycznej [The Foundations of Understanding and Interpretation of Metaphysical Separation],” 148.

²⁹ Chudy, “Poznanie istnienia (bytu) w ujęciu tomistów egzystencjalnych (dokończenie) [The Cognition of the Existence (of Being) as Viewed by Existential Thomists (Completion)],” 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

³¹ Krąpiec, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, 99.

³² M. A. Krąpiec, “Filozofia i nauki [Philosophy and Sciences],” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 37–38, no. 1 (1989–1990): 177.

hension.³³ A. B. Stępień thinks that for separation to be carried out, there is some “minimum” constituted by the act of ascertaining at least two different qualities or sets of qualities.³⁴ Though existential judgments may vary as far as their force is concerned. Moreover, they may undergo various phases of clarification. Nevertheless, they always remain obvious. This is the effect of their immediacy, which excludes any intermediaries, as existence does not evoke any cognitive form or sign in the cognizing subject. Also, it is a consequence of their prereflectivity—an existential judgment is entirely filled with its object; there is no creative activity of the subject—that will come only with the proper acts of reflection. And eventually, in existential judgments, we have to do with over-veracity and non-theoreticalness, which excludes the possibility of making a cognitive error. So to describe the existential judgment Krapiec uses such words as “obvious,” “indubitable,” “unmistakable;” simultaneously, he opposes counting this type of judgments, for example by Stępień,³⁵ among so-called location judgments (“Peter runs”), which he considers being entangled in some theoretical interpretations.³⁶ Over-veracity of the existential judgment makes it the condition of the truth expressed in the subject-predicate judgments because the verdict concerning the adequacy of the intellect to the thing presupposes the necessity to know the existence of the thing.

Krapiec distinguishes direct existential judgments grasping the existence of things of the external world in an unclear (“something exists”) or clear (“John exists”) manner, and the existential judgments are grasping one’s own “I” of the subject. The second type of existential

³³ M. A. Krapiec, *Ja—człowiek. Zarys antropologii filozoficznej* [I—Man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology] (Lublin: RW KUL, 1991), 158.

³⁴ Stępień, *Wprowadzenie do metafizyki* [Introduction to Metaphysics], 52.

³⁵ A. B. Stępień, “Rola doświadczenia w punkcie wyjścia metafizyki [The Role of Experience at the Starting Point of Metaphysics],” *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 17, no. 4 (1974): 36.

³⁶ Krapiec, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, 88.

judgments are indirect judgments, being the result of reasoning based on the direct existential judgments (*e.g.*, “God exists,” “the soul exists”). Because of their primacy and how they run, existential judgments are the acts of intellectual cognition that are irreducible to any other acts. For this reason, they have an entirely different structure from the structure of the subject-predicate judgments. They belong to the so-called *iudicio de secundo adiacente*, which means that they do not have a predicate since their only content is the statement of the existence of an object; there is no ascribing to the object any quality as it happens in the case of predicative judgments. And it is existential judgments that the process of human cognition starts with, so they are the basis of all further cognitive acts. Metaphysical cognition is, to a great extent, the process of making explicit of that which has been apprehended in the existential judgment.³⁷

At the second stage of singling out and identifying the object of realistic metaphysics, the methodical analysis of the “content” of existential judgments is carried out. Here the data about various concrete things of the world included in the judgments are tested by way of negative judgments (S is not P). The purpose of this procedure is not to discover what constitutes this particular being (John, a triangle, an oak tree), but to state what it means “to be a being as such”—that is, what necessarily belongs to every being, without what a being would not exist and it would not be this particular being. By juxtaposing existence affirmed in existential judgments to the content of beings presented in them, we “*cognitively separate*, which in reality cannot be identified,”³⁸ as Krapiec notes. “Exists” in an existential judgment is not and cannot be identical with the content of an existing being mentioned in the judgment (*e.g.*, John, an oak tree) because then all that exists would have to

³⁷ See P. Gondek, *Projekt autonomicznej filozofii realistycznej* [Project of an Autonomous Realistic Philosophy] (Lublin: PTTA & Wyd. KUL, 2015), 162–186.

³⁸ Krapiec, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, 91.

be the content presented in the existential judgment which is an obvious absurdity. Procedures proving non-identity of the existence and the content of a being mentioned in an existential judgment lead, at the same time, to the observation that in a concrete being, its existence and its content belong together and are subordinated to each other. According to Krapiec, the existences of particular beings are “proportional to the concrete contents they realize.”³⁹ It means that in each case of being, we have to do with different concrete content and a different—proportional to this content—existence, which does not change the fact that both elements (existence and content) are necessary for “being a being.” Thus, the analysis results identify the factors determining the “content” of each being presented in the existential judgment.⁴⁰

The effect of the negative way of analyzing the relational connections given in the first cognitive apprehension is, among others, the conclusion that the existence approached in such a way is not exhausted in any particular case of being and, at the same time, it appears to be a transcendental factor without which no being would be real (actualized) and cognizable. The second and, in a sense, simultaneous conclusion concerns the content aspect of the cognized things. On the one hand, this aspect is realized by the act of existence. On the other hand, it determines the reality and makes existence of this concrete thing; it is not some general or indefinite existence. So through the separation method,

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴⁰ Krapiec put this into the following words: “In the process of the ‘separation’ of being as being, therefore, there enters the aspect of the differentiation of content and existence in particular beings, but only to make it possible . . . to apprehend that which is ‘common’ to ontic reality as a whole. Reality is not just concrete determinate content, since in every ontic instance this content is really different; it is also not just existence, since, as proportional to the content, existence is also really different in every ontic instance; and, finally, it is not just the relation of existence to content, since this relation, apprehended generally, is the universal concept of relatedness, and apprehended concretely, is also really different in every ontic instance. Being as such consists in the presence of any concrete content whatsoever under an actual and proportional existence.” *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, 94.

we determine the basic “components” of the cognized thing, which consists of what an existential judgment expresses—that is, “concrete content and proportional existence.”⁴¹ Questioning the real difference between the factors of being identified above leads inevitably to monism, which means identifying the existence with the essence, assigning a necessary character to the existence of a concrete thing, and identifying the essence with the existence that results with the absolutization of a concrete essence. Instead, as Krąpiec noted, “both essence and the existence proportional to it are always concrete, unique, and unrepeatable, completely ordered to one another and united with one another, such that it is impossible to separate one element from the other without the immediate annihilation of the whole.”⁴²

The third stage of the separation method has in its purpose formulating the real notion of being as being, which is the proper object of the metaphysical cognition. It is done by moving the analysis of the “components” of being grasped in an existential judgment from the categorial aspect, in which a concrete being is always realized, to the transcendental plane, which includes every case of being. In this way, being is apprehended as “any determinate content whatsoever and its proportional concrete existence” or, in other words, to be a being as a being means “to exist concretely in a determinate content.”⁴³ The basis of the apprehension of the existence and the content of being, realized proportionally concerning each other in each concrete case of being—as transcendental aspects taking place in every being—is the analogy of being thanks to which it is discovered that both the existence and possessing some definite content are necessary for being a being. For this reason, the basic notion of being formulated on the ground of meta-

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 451.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 93–94.

physics has both transcendental and, at the same time, analogical character.⁴⁴

So conceived being, described in traditional metaphysics under the name “being as being,” is the proper object of metaphysical cognition. This concept of being may be applied to all beings. However, in an unclear way, it does not express any individual, species, or generic properties of being, but only does it express being’s most general determinations that describe what “being a being” consists of. That is why, according to Krapiec, this is not *de facto* a concept but a “judgment of a relative identity;” it is true that in such judgment, “being” is the subject and the predicate, but because there is a duplication of the content and the existence, the subject, and the predicate mean the content aspect and the existential aspect of the being respectively.⁴⁵ Despite the primacy of existence—in the aspect of being as well as in the aspect of cognition—which as the primary act of being realizes the reality and the cognizability of every being, in the concept of being, we can stress both the existential and the essential side, which means that the role of the subject can be fulfilled by “exists” and the role of the predicate can be fulfilled by “what it is,” and vice versa. Emphasizing the primary “components” of the concept of being is indispensable so that the metaphysical cognition would not be narrowed down just to one aspect, since this would lead, on the one hand, to skipping the aspect of existence and, on the other hand, when not taking into account the content, we would reduce the cognition to lived experience solely since without concepts it is impossible to form any judgment about the cognized reality.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 98. Kamiński put it similarly: “The thesis that ‘Being is being’ expresses that being taken essentially is identical with itself taken existentially. Oneness in the concept of being is, therefore, the oneness of the relation (the proportion) between the internal elements that constitute a real being.” S. Kamiński, “Czym są w filozofii i w logice tzw. pierwsze zasady? [What Are in Philosophy and Logic so-Called First Principles],” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 11, no. 1 (1963): 7, trans. T.D.

The “concept of being” created through the metaphysical separation is, according to Krapiec, the chief and the first “principle” that expresses the components of reality. As such, it is the principle that “governs” the entire reality.⁴⁶ All further metaphysical cognition consists in making explicit the “content” of this primary cognitive apprehension.

General Method of the Metaphysical Cognition

The separation method has a fundamental significance for realistic metaphysics not only because of the determination of its proper object but also because of defining the specificity of the type of cognition characteristic of this branch of knowledge, as well as explaining the problems undertaken on its ground. Separation, just as the whole of metaphysical cognition, starts with the natural and spontaneous cognitive attitude of the cognizing subject toward reality; in this attitude already in the primary and the simplest cognitive acts—that is in the acts of affirmation of the existence of objects and their properties in the existential judgments—there takes place differentiation of elements in the cognized beings. It guarantees realism of the metaphysical cognition because—by its nature—it is oriented toward the existing things and not toward the creations of the human psyche; thanks to that, other types of cognition can be grounded in the real world. Deriving cognition from existential judgments is a testimony to its process-like nature. Therefore, in the first apprehension *in actu confuse* the whole “content” of the cognized being is given and then it is gradually clarified in further cognitive acts.⁴⁷ In the following reflective cognition, there takes place identification and specification of the properties of the cognized beings, while the cognizing subject is first and primarily concentrated

⁴⁶ Krapiec, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, 97.

⁴⁷ Kamiński, “Explanation in Metaphysics. Wyjaśnianie w metafizyce,” 195–196.

on what belongs to beings in the mode of necessity and without what the cognition of those beings would not be possible.

Thus in metaphysics, based on the separation method, the reality is approached in terms of its necessary and general aspects. This is why metaphysical cognition is characterized by transcendentalness. Compared with other acts of cognition, it is the base cognition, since it is directed to that in the objects without which they could not only be cognized, but also they could not exist, *i.e.*, they could not be beings. And it is within the framework of this type of cognition that we can pose the crucial question from the perspective of metaphysics: why does being as such exist, and why is it cognizable? It is because separation enables one to discover what decides about being a being in each case of being. And, while allowing that, separation does not require deduction or generalization, or induction, but it will enable us to distinguish in concrete being what makes being as such.⁴⁸

The method of realistic metaphysics confirms that the base human cognition has got a judgmental character, since in this cognition we have to do with the statement about the given state of things and, first of all, the statement of the fact of the very existence of being—this fact is directly and primarily given. That invalidates the problem of so-called “mediation”—that is, the concentration of cognition on cognitive intermediaries which could take over the role of the real object—as judgmental statements refer the cognizing person directly to reality.⁴⁹ Also, judgmental cognition guarantees pre-reflectivity and non-theoreticalness of the experience of reality, which allows talking about the non-assumptiveness of metaphysics. Basing cognition on conceptual foundations either negates the cognitive value of experience or introduces a theoretical element into it, which in both cases is connected with adopt-

⁴⁸ See Kamiński, “The Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics. Metody współczesnej metafizyki,” 286–287.

⁴⁹ Krapiec, Maryniarczyk, “Metafizyka [Metaphysics],” 111.

ing some assumptions. Separational cognition does not lose contact with the existing being; hence it is described as objective cognition. Because of the real presence of the object, it enables to really adjust the intellect to the cognized reality; in other words, such cognition has a veritable character, as reality is the ultimate criterion of the truth apprehended by the intellect. Another property of metaphysical cognition, resulting from adjusting the cognitive acts to the cognized beings, is its analogicalness. In this sense, metaphysical cognition is open to the richness of beings in their concrete forms. Therefore, metaphysics cannot be treated as a general theory of reality but as a type of cognition. As a result, one can simultaneously gain knowledge about any concrete being and the entire reality.

Thanks to the separation method, explaining the fundamental issues within metaphysics has the above-mentioned general properties of metaphysical cognition, crucially significant for grounding the formulated explanations in real beings. Among the most important issues, there are transcendental properties of being which, at the same time, constitute the universal structures of being based—in the intra-being dimension—on the separational apprehension of essence and existence (thing, one, separateness), and—in the inter-being dimension—on the relation of being toward the mental faculties of intellect and will (the truth, the good, the beautiful). Some other essential issues from the perspective of metaphysics concern structure, causes, analogy, and participation of being, which, in turn, are connected with the explanation of other significant properties of beings such as dynamism, materiality, identity, or the mode of existence. The explanations are based on the separational identification of subontic elements that ultimately substantiate the explained facts' existence. Although the method of explanation has a negative character—since only a given state of things is pointed out, for which (in a reductionist manner) the necessary and the ultimate non-contradictifying reason (factor) is sought for and accepted—never-

theless, the identified factors are not a purely conceptual assumption, but the real cause that constitutes beings.⁵⁰ The informative value of such a procedure is indeed somewhat limited. Still, one must be aware of the weight of the information that the method enables to discover the necessary aspects of being on which the metaphysical cognition is concentrated. The identified factors-causes are not the immediate object or the goal of cognition, but discovering them allows us to know a whole being in its concreteness. One must remember that it is characteristic of the separation method that its purpose is to gain knowledge about an entire thing and not just its aspects. A great significance of the knowledge about the whole of being cannot be overestimated and indicates the role of metaphysics in other branches of philosophy which deal with beings of some chosen categories depending on which field it is (anthropology, epistemology, ethics, etc.). So the separation method can be applied in all subsections of philosophy, giving them the metaphysical character.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Kamiński, "Explanation in Metaphysics. Wyjaśnianie w metafizyce," 197–199.

⁵¹ A recent example of the application of the separation method on the ground of anthropological philosophy is the work by P. S. Mazur, *Zarys podstaw filozofii człowieka. Antropologiczne zastosowanie metody separacji* [An Outline of the Foundations of Philosophy of Man: Anthropological Application of the Method of Separation] (Kraków: Akademia Ignatianum, 2016). In the summary of the book, the author writes: "Separation . . . can be similarly applied also to the analysis of existential subjective statements and attempts to determine the starting point of philosophy of man. As a result, separation enhances the reality of the existence of the human body subject included in an existential statement, allowing first to state the non-identity of the subject ('I') with its existence. This existence does not belong to the content of the 'I' as the subject, but along with it, it is its constituting ontological factor. For the philosophy of man, the key importance is given to the impossibility of dividing existence in itself from existence for oneself, which was observed thanks to using the method of separation. These are precisely different ways of knowing one's own existence by man, not different structures of existence. Separation shows that the difference of essence and existence is a reality, while the distinction between existence in itself (seen from the side of the object) and existence for oneself (from the point of view of the subject) only has a thought-like character, ontically referring to the reality of different ways of learning about it (experi-

Conclusion

In metaphysical cognition, many different methods of inductionist, intuitionistic, axiomatic, analytical, phenomenological, or transcendental character are applied.⁵² This kind of method cannot always include and connect reductionness and intuitionness proper to the metaphysical cognition to fulfill the need to arrive at the most elementary properties of being (reduction) in the most primary way (intuition). The main reason for that is the individuality on the side of being and the general nature of mental cognition. In traditional metaphysics, this difficulty was overcome by referring to the theory of analogy of being, which says that at the basis of human cognition, there are analogical concepts that simultaneously apprehend what is common for all beings in what is totally different in a given being. As the very base cognition, metaphysics exclusively has been using such concepts since they guarantee the realism of cognition, on the one hand, and the objectivism as well as the universalism of the cognitive apprehensions, on the other hand. Nevertheless, there was the need for reflection on the primary method of metaphysics, which would explain the formulation of this kind of concept, ensuring, at the same time, the mentioned above reductionness and intuitionness of the metaphysical cognition.

Wide-scale work on such a method was undertaken by the representatives of the Lublin Philosophical School; following the intuition of St. Thomas Aquinas, they called it the “metaphysical separation.” This method not only explains the creation of analogical concepts and through that the realism, objectivism, and transcendentalness of the metaphysi-

encing it). The existence of man as a subject and his existence as an object are the only forms of human existence.” *Ibid.*, 204.

⁵² See T. Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* [On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Questions] (Kęty: Antyk, 2004); S. T. Kołodziejczyk, *Przewodnik po metafizyce* [A Guidebook to Metaphysics] (Kraków: WAM, 2011).

cal cognition as well as joining reductionness and intuitionness in this type of cognition (existential judgments), but it also serves as the basis of including other methods into the range of metaphysical investigations, adjusting them to the specificity of metaphysical cognition. For such cognition is directed toward the whole being, and within this “whole,” various aspects are identified in order to understand this whole. All of that is connected with the determination of the object of metaphysical cognition (being as being) and identifying the transcendental properties of being while taking into account their existential aspect. The application of the method is not exclusively limited to defining the foundations of the metaphysical cognition; the method also has a fundamental significance in other domains of metaphysical inquiry, especially the ones concerned with the structure of being where also the existential aspect comes to the fore. Thanks to the separation method, the central role of metaphysics in particular philosophical branches (so-called particular metaphysics) is revealed—there the method also shows itself as the crucial one, as it takes into consideration the problem of existence, which should not be left out in any philosophical explanation of any particular object of analysis. Unfortunately, other methods do not cope well with the problem of existence (perhaps the exceptions here are intuitionistic methods, but they basically cannot be objectified), so when they are used in metaphysics as the fundamental ones, they deprive metaphysics of the realism, which is (and should be) its crucial characteristic.



**Separation as the Basic Method of Realistic Metaphysics:
The Approach by the Lublin Philosophical School Representatives**

SUMMARY

The author discusses the problem of separation as the base method of metaphysical cognition as approached by the Lublin Philosophical School representatives. He begins by showing the sources of the method, seeing them in St. Thomas Aquinas's intuitions which were discovered only in the 20th century by those who developed the existential interpretation of Aquinas's metaphysics (J. Maritain, É. Gilson, M. A. Krąpiec). In this context, the author draws attention to the achievements of the creators and co-creators of the Lublin Philosophical School. They made an exceptional contribution to highlighting the very bases of the separation method and its significance for the entire metaphysical cognition. From the perspective of metaphysics, the foremost and crucial is the application of separation for identifying the object of metaphysical cognition. At stake here is the determination of the first cognitive apprehension—that is, the grasp of what the intellect cognizes as the first (*primum cognitum*) and what was called in the tradition “being as being” or “the concept of being.” The separation method allows, first of all, to consider the existential aspect of being in cognitive apprehensions, which is accomplished in the three stages that start with and are based on the analysis of existential judgments. Next, the author describes the application of the separation method in other domains of existential cognition, showing how indispensable the method is in preserving such inherent features of this type of cognition as transcendentalness, directness, realism, and analogicalness.

KEYWORDS

Lublin Philosophical School, separation, metaphysical cognition, metaphysics, *primum cognitum*, existential judgment, transcendentalness, directness, realism, analogicalness.

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